

Case study on executive summaries and critiques

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Protecting the House of Under Armour

Patrick Kraft and Jason W. Lee's article "Protecting the House of Under Armour" tells the story of a "young and up-and-coming" brand (2009, p. 112), Under Armour, who has become the leader of performance apparel, with an uncontested 75% market share, by applying innovative and efficient marketing strategies. Competing against globally renowned brands such as Nike and Adidas, the mission of Under Armour, to become a reputable brand in the sportswear market was not an easy one, yet the company succeeded in making its products highly appreciated by athletes around the world, positioning the brand in the mainstream sport fashion in a relative short time. The article summarizes the strategies that Kevin Plank, the company's founder has implemented for reaching the brand of choice for athletes focused on improving their games. First of all, there was a business philosophy, to create a fabric that would keep the athletes dry during the game, as the moisture that usually penetrates the cotton wear creates an uncomfortable sensation for the players, affecting the performance of their game, so he created Under Armour, promising and delivering a new game experience, sweat-free. This business philosophy was doubled by a customized marketing strategy, which implied tactics such as athlete endorsement (pitching the product to sport-related schools and universities, or directly to sport celebrities), word of mouth (making people talk about the brand, recommending it to their friends and acquaintances), infusion of pop culture (determining the sport icons and other celebrity to wear Under Armour apparel in interviews, or during their training, which reflected in the

consumer culture, as people started buying the UA products because their favorite stars also wear them) and product placement (introducing the product into movies, TV shows, video games).

CRITIQUE

Protecting the House of Under Armour

The examined article offers a very good example of how a business strategy effectively reached a new brand's objectives, through a correct implementation (execution). While the marketing strategies used for creating awareness around Under Armour brand and for making it globally renowned, dominating the performance apparel category are not actually revolutionary, the way they were implemented indicates a very good knowledge of the target market, of its needs and of how to reach it.

Craft and Lee (2009) present the story of Kevin Plank, the owner and the entrepreneur behind Under Armour brand, focusing on the brand's success, mostly. However, for better understanding the reality of the market, it would have been helpful if the article would have also focused on the challenges and difficulties that Plank came across in his path of positioning Under Armour where it is today. Simply mentioning that it competed against strong brands such as Nike or Adidas is not sufficient for creating a comprehensive idea about how Under Armour dealt with the various threats and challenges imposed to a new entrant in a highly competitive market. This would, therefore, constitute the weakness of the article. Yet, the strength of the article consists in the accurate and very clear description of the strategies used for promoting Under Armour, which represent a really good lesson for Sport Management professionals or students, serving as a good practices

example. Probably the main idea that the article transmits is that entrepreneurs activating in sports industry should sense the “coolness”, as well as the sense of utility for the athletes, besides having a very detailed knowledge of the market. This approach to market allows Sports professionals to actively seek and seize new opportunities, just as the example offered by the authors of this article indicated, stating that Under Armour sought the athlete endorsement as the starting point of its brand positioning and in the same time of its business development.

Overall, I consider the article relevant as related to managerial and business strategies, indicating concise solutions for optimizing every dollar spent in the business development plan, which translates through value for money, which is a mission that entrepreneurs should not neglect in the current economy. Going right to the point implies, as Craft and Lee (2009) note, starting with a solid business philosophy, entrenched in the needs identified in the targeted market and dressing it with a focused business strategy and essentially with an accurate and precise execution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cartel Behavior: Amateurism in College Sports

In his article “Cartel Behavior and Amateurism in College Sports”, Kahn relates how the NCAA acts as a cartel, through its activities related to organizing basketball competitions, paying coaches’ salaries, dealing with rivals, granting scholarships to students athletes and establishing their amount or the level of the payments (considerably lower than the ones of professional players, which creates a strict requirement for these players to remain in the amateur division) that they receive for their performances,

limiting the output by restricting the members' access to televised games or the number of bowl games, activities that indicate a monopsonist behavior. The article shows that this behavior was in several occasions been blamed and the NCAA was involved in several antitrust suits as a results of its actions performed in the college basketball terrain. The article also analyzes how the college sports affects the rest of the university, referring to the sports revenues, quantity and quality of student applications, absolvent contributions or state's appropriation of higher education. The study indicates that NCAA's activities create a big revenue surplus but despite this aspect there are still reported operating losses. Yet, the research notes that the college sports activities do have an indirect positive effect on public and private contributions and it also impacts the attraction of students for the sport college universities. Likewise, college sports influence the rest of the university activities, as it produces alumni who may support their former universities, through their votes. Overall, the article concludes that while college sports have in general a positive influence both on the university and on the society, demonstrating market value, its cartel-like activities impede the players from optimizing their performances and even generates a down movement of the supply curve for the star athletes, which is ineffective for the market.

CRITIQUE

Cartel Behavior: Amateurism in College Sports

Lawrence M. Kahn explores the NCAA operations and dynamics in a ferocious way, referring to its activities that generate a monopsinist market. The tone of the article mingles cold economic analysis with subjective reflections,

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which are, however, the result of the economic analysis of the amateurism in college sports, indicating an accusing finger against NCAA actions.

These aspects mentioned so far, reflect the strengths of the article. Yet, the article's main weakness stands in the fact that it employs maybe a too high level of economic analysis sophistication, which might be quite heavy for a Sport Manager student and which might even require a second reading for Sport Manager Professionals for a better understanding of the dynamics of the analysis. Indeed, neither students nor professionals would familiarize with the concepts while reading this article, as they constitute an elevated basis of their entrepreneurial education, which includes economic, legal, accounting or media analysis content, with which they must already be accustomed with.

Overall, the article is very well connected to the market realities, but for a complete analysis, Kahn should have also presented a theoretic behavior of NCAA on an ideal competitive market, so that the students to be able to compare it with the monopsonistic market in which NCAA activates.

References

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